

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00156 051409Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

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R 051319Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 915

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: CONVENTION ELECTION RESULTS

REF: BELFAST 149

1. COUNTING ENDED MAY 3 FOR RESULTS VOTING ON DELEGATES
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. RESULTS FOLLOW:

- (A) UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) 46 (OFFICIAL
UNIONISTS 19, DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST 13, VANGUARD UNIONISTS 14).
 - (B) SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP), 17.
 - (C) ALLIANCE PARTY, 8.
 - (D) UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND (UPNI), 5.
 - (E) NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY, 1.
 - (F) INDEPENDENT UNIONIST, 1.
- REPUBLICAN CLUBS WON NO RPT NO SEATS.

2. TURNOUT WAS LOW, FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, 65.8 PER CENT
OF ELECTORATE WITH HIGH PERCENTAGE SPOILED VOTES. OF
1,026,987 ELIGIBLES, 676,103 VOTED AND THERE 17,989 SPOILED
VOTES. BULK LATTER NOT RPT NOT BELIEVED PROTEST OR BOYCOTT
VOTES BUT DUE COMPLEXITIES PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND
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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00156 051409Z

SINGLE TRANSFERRABLE VOTE SYSTEM.

3. DIRECTION LOYALIST VICTORY STATEMENTS IS THAT IN RECEIVING 54 PER CENT FIRST PREFERENCE BALLOTS UUUC HAS RECEIVED OVERWHELMING MANDATE FROM MAJORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR ITS POLICIES INCLUDING CONTINUED STRONG LINK WITH U.K., ESTABLISHMENT LOCAL PARLIAMENT WITH BROAD ATTRIBUTIONS AND SELECTIONS EXECUTIVE DETERMINED ON SAME PRINCIPLES AS WESTMINSTER. COMMENTATORS ALSO POINTING TO WHAT THEY TERM "DEMISE" UPNI WHOSE POWER-SHARING SYMBOL BRIAN FAULKNER, WON SEAT ONLY ON NINTH COUNT ON TRANSFERS FROM OTHER CANDIDATES.

4. GENERAL DIRECTION SDLP STATEMENTS NOW SEEMS BE REITERATION THAT EXECUTIVE POWER-SHARING PROVISIONS AND IRISH DIMENSION INDISPENSABLE IN ANY CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK. PARTY HAS MADE CLEAR IT WILL LOOK TO HMG ASSURANCES IN THIS REGARD AND ONE SDLP SPOKESMAN SEAMUS MALLON HAS ALREADY CALLED FOR IRISH GOVERNMENT TO PERSUADE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT THERE NO RPT NOT ALTERNATIVE TO POWER-SHARING.

5. ALTHOUGH AT LEAST ONE LOYALIST GROUPING, VANGUARD, HAS DRAFT CONSTITUTION READY TO PRESENT, MOST POLITICIANS PUBLICLY REJECT EXTREME PESSIMISM ABOUT CONVENTION APPEARING IN SOME PRESS AND TELEVISION COMMENTARIES. SOME LOYALISTS HAVE REASSURED CATHOLIC MINORITY THAT EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL SHARE IS MAIN CONCERN. EVEN VANGUARD PARTY LEADER WILLIAM CRAIG HAS SAID THERE ROOM FOR NEGOTIATIONS AT CONVENTION ON ANY ISSUES BUT POWER SHARING AND IRISH DIMENSION. TERM "DEADLOCK" AND EARLY SPECULATION ABOUT SDLP WALKOUT ARE PRESS CREATIONS AND HAVE NOT RPT NOT ORIGINATED WITH POLITICIANS. MOST OF THE LATTER HAVE DECLARED THEIR RESOLVE TO MAKE CONVENTION A SUCCESS. IT IS CLEAR HOWEVER THAT EARLY SESSIONS OF CONVENTION WILL BE MOST IMPORTANT. IF DELEGATES WILL FIRST EXPLORE WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED THERE STILL SOME PROMISE OF PROGRESS. ULTIMATELY THIS PROMISE DEPENDS ON SDLP WILLINGNESS ACCEPT LESS THAN THEIR MANIFESTO DEMANDS. LOYALISTS WILL NOT RPT NOT COMPROMISE ON POWER-SHARING ISSUE. THE FATE OF BRIAN FAULKNER HAS BEEN TOO VIVIDLY RE-EMPHASIZED FOR THAT.

6. MUCH NO DEPENDS ON ACTIONS PROVISIONAL IRA. THE SINN FEIN BOYCOTT WHETHER SIGNIFICANTLY ENFORCED BY INTEMIDATION OR NOT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BELFAS 00156 051409Z

MUST BE COUNTED IN PART FOR THE REDUCTION OF VOTER SUPPORT FOR THE SDLP. SDLP SHARE OF CONVENTION SEATS IS REDUCED BY TWO FROM NUMBER THEY HELD IN ASSEMBLY. THE REPUBLICAN CLUBS ALSO SUFFERED FROM BOYCOTTS AND VOTER APATHY. PROVISIONALS CAN NOW ALMOST GUARANTEE CONVENTION FAILURE BY RESUMING HOSTILITIES OR THEY CAN WAIT FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE WILL BE COLLAPSE OF CONVENTION AND CONSEQUENT REVIVAL OF CATHOLIC SYMPATHY FOR PROVISIONAL CAUSE. NOBODY IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS NOW PREDICTING THAT THE

CEASEFIRE CAN BE EXTENDED INTO LASTING PEACE.

7. DETAILS ELECTION RESULTS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.
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